

Duxbury Clipper

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SILVERSMITH: Helen Philbrick holds a silver mustard pot that her father, Franklin Porter, made in the 1930s. The DR&HS showed her the piece before it becomes a part of the society's silver collection. See story on page 16.

Photo by Morag MacLachlan

Society Acquires Silver Piece Crafted in 1930s

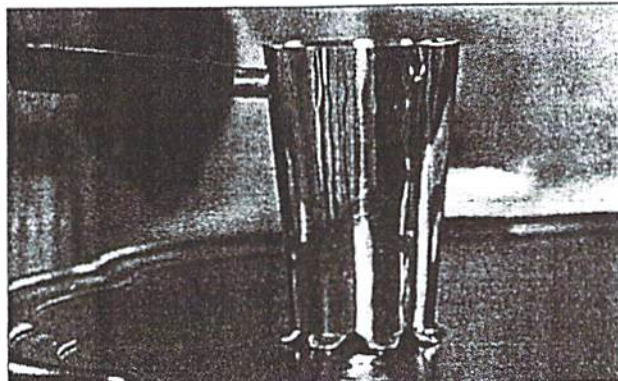
By MORAG MACLACHLAN

One of Duxbury's most interesting residents was presented with a blast from her past at the Duxbury Rural & Historical Society's Nathaniel Winsor, Jr., House last Thursday afternoon.

Helen Philbrick, 96, was shown a mustard pot made by Franklin Porter. Philbrick smiled saying she remembered the piece well. Philbrick is Porter's daughter and she used to help him craft items like the mustard pot, which featured an intricate pineapple on the pot's lid.

"I was his apprentice and later his assistant," she said gazing at the piece. "A lady in California sent us a letter saying 'why don't you do a pineapple because that's the symbol of hospitality?' I know how to make a pineapple like this. It's a neat piece. I'm happy to see it."

Terry Vose of Powder Point Avenue contacted a collector and silver appraiser in Boston named Alex Goriansky last June after Vose visited Philbrick and admired a collection of Franklin Porter spoons she had. To Vose's delight, Goriansky had seven or eight pieces of Franklin Porter. Vose decided to con-



Vose also purchased this tea infuser made by Franklin Porter. He showed Helen Philbrick the piece, but will keep it at his home.

tact the society's chairman of the collections committee, Bob Hale. Hale said the mustard pot will now be permanently displayed in the silver case in the dining room of the King Caesar House.

"The hammering on these pieces is spectacular," Vose said. "When I called the collector in Boston I certainly didn't expect it would blossom into a piece for the historical society."

Vose also showed Philbrick a piece of her father's handiwork that he purchased from the same appraiser and keeps on his own dining room table...a silver tea infuser. Vose said it was the second time Goriansky said he had acquired the tea infuser. Philbrick said the wooden handle of the infuser was carved from a bread fruit tree. She said the way the base of both the infuser and the mustard pot flared out was her dad's signature design.

"This is so familiar," Philbrick said looking at the two pieces. "These sold so fast."

The pieces date back to the 1930s. Although she doesn't remember how much a piece of her father's work sold for at that time, Philbrick did share details she recalled of his business in Danvers. She said her father

in a factory when he was 45. Porter volunteered to be the caretaker of a home in Danvers dating back to the 1600s.

"The house was about to be demolished, but the DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) came along and bought it," Philbrick said.

She said a wood shed behind the home became Porter's workshop. Her father called it Saint Dunstan after the patron saint of silversmiths. Philbrick said a person can always identify a Franklin Porter original by looking for her father's maker's mark, which was a backwards uppercase letter F back to back with an uppercase letter P.

"That was made using a steel stamp. You would do it with a hammer. You had to practice to get it straight," Philbrick said gazing at the mustard pot, which holds a delicate porcelain demitasse cup inside its silver exterior. "I wonder where it's been all these years?"

The mystery surrounding the whereabouts of this mustard pot is over. DR&HS Executive Director Patrick Browne said the pot is the society's first piece of Franklin Porter silver and that the public can see the piece at the King Caesar House when the home opens for the summer June 24.



Terry Vose donated this mustard pot to the Duxbury Rural & Historical Society after locating several pieces by Franklin Porter at a Boston silversmith's shop. The society will showcase the piece in the dining room of the King